

Directive

APHIS 3220.1

5/11/04

APHIS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) ACQUISITION WAIVER REQUIREMENTS

1. PURPOSE

This Directive communicates APHIS policy and guidelines for IT acquisitions requiring a waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO). The IT acquisition approval process is the mechanism by which APHIS and the USDA OCIO monitors and reviews Agency-level IT spending.

USDA established this process to improve the management of Agency IT projects, create an opportunity for information exchange between staff at the Agency level and at the Department level, and address Departmentwide redundancies and inefficiencies.

2. SCOPE

This Directive applies to all APHIS employees and contractors.

3. DEFINITION

Information Technology. Any equipment, interconnected system(s), or subsystem(s) of equipment that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information by the Agency. The term “information technology” includes computers, ancillary equipment, software, firmware, and similar procedures, services (including support services), and related resources.

4. EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

a. The term “information technology” includes:

- (1) Specialty desktop machines (Geographic Information System (GIS) workstations).
- (2) Scanning equipment or services.
- (3) Programs or applications either developed in-house or by contractors, consulting services, personnel, telephones, cell phones, palms, blackberries, or Global Positioning System equipment.

- b. The term “information technology” **does not** include any equipment that:
 - (1) Is acquired by a contractor incidental to a contract;
 - (2) Contains embedded information technology that is used as an integral part of the product, but the principal function of which is not the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information. For example, Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) equipment such as thermostats or temperature control devices, and medical equipment where information technology is integral to its operation are not information technology.

5. POLICY

- a. It is APHIS policy to comply with USDA Information Technology Capital Planning and Investment Control requirements and guidelines. In addition, the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 requires that Agencies institute an approach for managing and controlling IT investments.
- b. APHIS will comply with the Department’s requirement for submission of waiver requests for IT expenditures above the \$25,000 threshold as directed by the Department’s CIO.
- c. The waiver process will be managed by the Marketing and Regulatory Programs Business Services (MRPBS), Information Technology Division (ITD), Forecasting and Planning Services (FPS) Branch.
- d. Failure to comply with this Directive may result in unnecessary delays in completing proposed IT acquisitions and a failure to have adequate IT resources to meet program strategic initiatives.

6. REQUIREMENTS

- a. The following IT acquisition activities **require** a waiver from USDA’s OCIO as part of the acquisition approval process:
 - (1) IT acquisitions **in excess** of **\$25,000** (for the lifecycle of the project);
 - (2) Software or hardware for major systems **within** the functional areas of the Department’s Corporate Administrative and Financial Systems Portfolio. These items must have a waiver **regardless of cost**, including:
 - (a) Accounting/Budget Execution.

- (b) Budget Formulation/Salary Projections.
 - (c) Human Resources.
 - (d) Procurement (purchase card and other acquisitions).
 - (e) Property (personal and real).
 - (f) Payroll.
 - (g) Travel.
 - (3) Telecommunication acquisitions involving establishment of connectivity for voice, data, or video telecommunication at new or relocated sites that have **not** been planned for and **not** entered in the USDA Forecast Inventory and Reporting (FIR) system – **regardless of cost**. (Only the Telecommunication Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO) or designee can enter telecommunication requests into the FIR system.)
 - (4) eGov enabling technologies that are duplicative of the eGovernment Presidential Initiatives or USDA Smart Choices. APHIS, IT will identify opportunities to integrate separate requests for acquisition of equipment or software that could potentially be extended across the Agency.
- b. The following activities are **exempt** from the USDA IT acquisition approval process:
- (1) The renewal of existing contracts for maintenance and leases, as long as optional enhancements and/or upgrades exceeding the \$25,000 threshold are not involved; and
 - (2) Information technology acquisitions for organizations other than USDA Agencies when funded by USDA grants.

7. EXCEPTIONS

Except as noted in Section 6. above, each APHIS Program/Business Unit will meet the requirements of this Directive.

8. GUIDELINES

ITD, FPS has developed a process to assist APHIS program units with guidance in the preparation, planning, review, and approval of waiver requests by the OCIO. These guidelines can be found at the following website:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/it_planning.html. In addition, IT acquisitions must be related to an investment in APHIS' approved IT Investment Portfolio System (ITIPS) (www.itips.gov).

9. INQUIRIES

- a. Inquiries regarding this Directive may be directed to:

Information Technology Division
Forecasting and Planning Services
4700 River Road, Unit 102
Riverdale, MD 20737
301-734-4901

- b. This Directive can be accessed at www.aphis.usda.gov/library.

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